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AUTHOR Griffith, Georgia
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ABSTRACT

Three short articles about music braille are presented for braille transcribers and teachers of the visually handicapped. The first article focuses on common in-accord-related errors in braille music and provides a definition of and information about accidentals and in-accords and doubling and in-accords. The second article deals with the rules governing grouping as described in the "Revised International Manual of Braille Music Notation 1956." The third article provides information about when and where to use slurs and ties. (LH)

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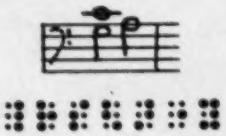
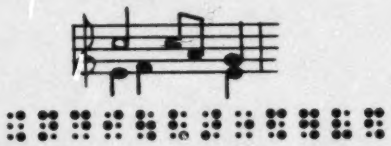
MUSIC BRAILLE

In-Accords

Georgia Griffith, Chairman

In the past few months, I have seen so many in-accord-related errors in braille music that I feel an article on this subject is overdue.

Definition

When two or more parts sounding together within the same measure cannot be written as intervals, the parts are brailled in succession and joined by an in-accord sign. If the parts each have a full measure of beats, a full-measure in-accord is used. Example:

Both sides of an in-accord must have the same number of beats. In the following, the print copy shows nothing on beat 3 in the lower voice. The transcriber must insert a rest of the correct value to balance the beats. Example:

If the voices are joined for only part of a measure, a part-measure in-accord is used. In this case the measure sectioning sign sets off the joined parts. In the following example beats 3 and 4 illustrate a part-measure in-accord preceded by the measure sectioning sign.

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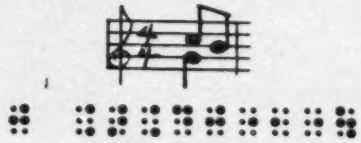
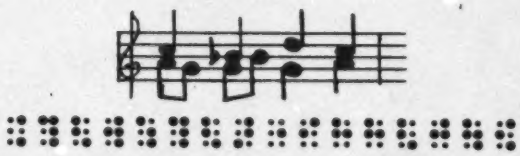
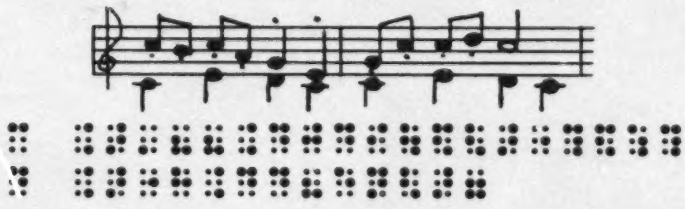
A part-measure in-accord, as the name implies, is used for an incomplete measure. A zero measure is always incomplete. Example:



Accidentals and In-Accords

Accidentals on one side of an in-accord have no effect on the corresponding notes on the other side of the in-accord. Accidentals must be restated. Example:

Doubling and In-Accords

Doubling on one side of an in-accord also has no effect on the notes on the other side. In the following the lower voice is not performed staccato. Example:



In the above example, all notes on the first side of the in-accord are staccato for both measures. Note the repeat sign in measure 2. The second half of the in-accord in measure 2 is an exact repetition of the second half of measure 1.

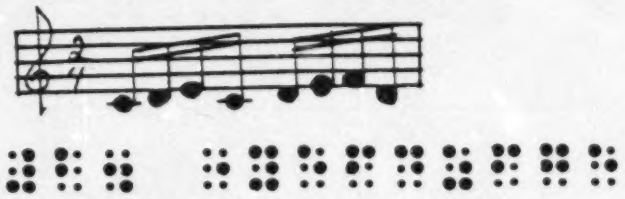
Additional rules governing in-accords are scattered throughout the *Revised International Manual of Braille Music Notation 1956*. In-accord is listed in the index, followed by numerous paragraph numbers. If you have any questions after studying the paragraphs listed, contact your music braille committee. We are ready to assist you with any transcribing problems.

Grouping

Georgia Griffith, Chairman

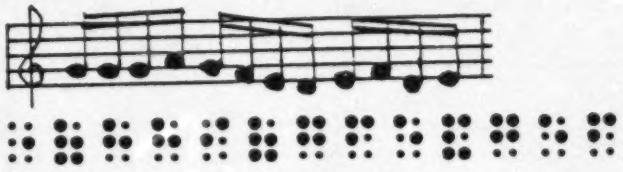
Grouping is a method of writing braille which facilitates reading. The first note of a braille group is given its correct musical value. The remaining notes in the group are brailled with note-names only. That is, the dots at the bottom of the cell are not used. Two groups of four sixteenth notes are shown below.

Example 1.



Grouping must be according to the musical beat. The following example is incorrect for 9/8 time but quite correct for 3/4 time.

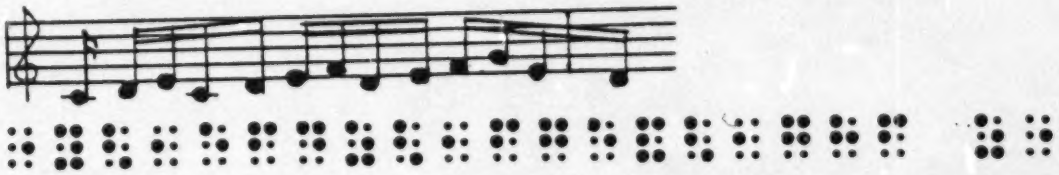
Example 2.



Often transcribers try to show the way print notes are beamed together by using braille grouping. The braille grouping must be according to the beat, and if print grouping crosses that b..., the braille music comma is employed.

In the following example twelve sixteenth notes are grouped by fours, but notes 2-3-4-5, 6-7-8-9, 10-11-12 and 1 in the next measure are shown as irregular print groups.

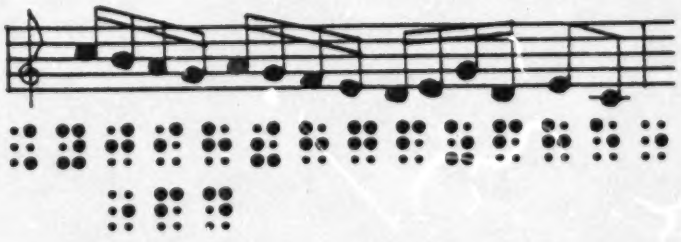
Example 3.



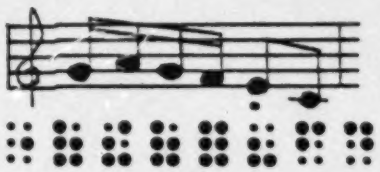
The *Revised International Manual of Braille Music Notation 1956* lists numerous rules governing grouping. Some of those most often misunderstood are explained below.

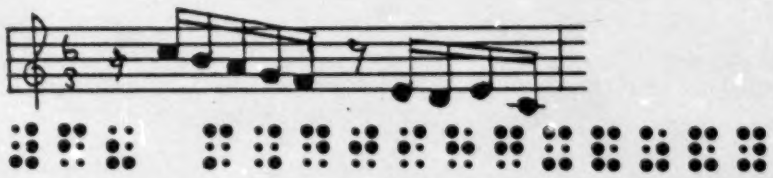
Grouping should not be used if the group is followed on the same line by an eighth note, however, the following is correct since the eighth notes are on a new line.

Example 4.

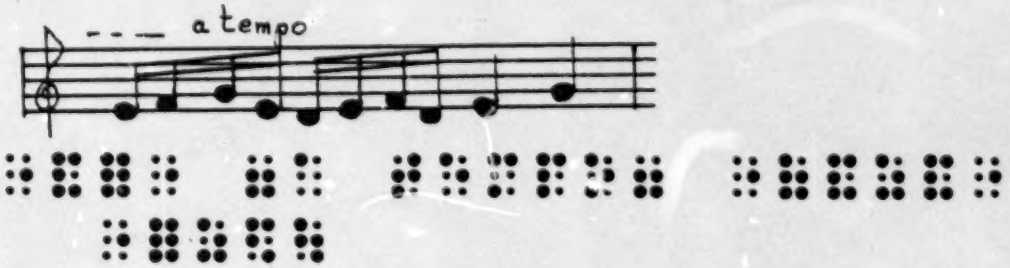


Grouping is not interrupted by the use of nuances. Therefore, grouping should not be used if the group is followed by an eighth note even if that eighth note is preceded by a staccato, accent or other nuance.

Example 5.

If there is a rest on any beat except the first, grouping cannot be used. Also, if a rest of a different value appears in the group the method is not employed.

Example 6.

Note that in the above example, the last four sixteenth notes cannot be grouped, since they fall on beats 5 and 6 of 6/8 time, a very common but unmusical error. The beats are counted ONE two three FOUR five six, not ONE two THREE four FIVE six.

Grouping should not be used if the group is interrupted for any reason by the braille music hyphen. If the group cannot be completed on the same line, or if a parenthetical expression interrupts the group, a braille music hyphen is used.

Example 7.

If you have further questions about grouping your Music Braille Committee will be happy to assist you.

Slurs and Ties

Georgia Griffith, Chairman

Transcribers are often confused about when and where to use slurs and ties. The following paragraphs will, I hope, clarify the matter.

Slurs

When two notes are slurred, the simple slur (dots 1-4) is brailled after the first note. If four notes are slurred, the sign is placed after the first three notes. If more than four notes are slurred, the transcriber has a choice between two methods of brailling the phrase.

The simple slur may be doubled by writing it twice after the first note in the phrase, and once before the last note; or the phrase may be preceded by dots 5-6 1-2 and followed by dots 4-5 2-3.

Overlapping Slurs

When one phrase ends and the next one begins on the same note, dots 5-6 1-2 4-5 2-3 should be placed at the point where the phrases overlap.

Other Slurs

The slur between staves (dots 5 1-4) is often confused with the slur between parts (dots 4-5-6 1-4). The former is used to represent a short line that passes from one staff to another. The latter represents a slur between two parts on the same staff.

Vocal Music

In vocal music, the slur signs are used somewhat differently. The simple slur (dots 1-4) is NEVER used for phrasing. This slur is placed between two or more notes that are sung on the same syllable or word. For example, in the first line of THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER there are six notes to be sung on five words. The reader has no way of knowing which word is sung on two notes unless a slur is placed between those notes. All phrases are enclosed within the phrasing slur, even if they are only two-note phrases.

The part-to-part slur (dots 4-5-6 1-4) also has a different meaning in vocal music. It is used when two verses, or two languages are performed differently to the same music. (See Paragraph 234, *Spanner Manual.)*

Ties

When two notes are tied, the single note tie (dots 4 1-4) is placed between them. Transcribers sometimes confuse a tie with a slur. Remember, like pitches are tied; un-like pitches are slurred.

When two or more notes in a chord are tied, the chord tie (dots 4-6 1-4) is brailled between the chords. I often see four-note chords with three of the notes tied separately with the single-note tie.

Some Reminders

In Bar over Bar format, all ties at the end of a parallel are restated at the beginning of the next parallel (Paragraph 60b, 1975 *American Addendum).* Transcribers who confuse slurs with ties incorrectly restate slurs also.

When a note is both slurred and tied, the slur is unnecessary and should be omitted (Paragraph 80, *1975 American Addendum).*

For further details, read the paragraphs listed under Slur and Tie in the index of the *Revised International Manual of Braille Music Notation 1956.* The Music Braille Committee will assist you with special problems at any time.

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